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POSSIBILITY OF DIRECT MILITARY ACTION IN THE BALKANS BY SOVIET SATELLITES

29 July 1950

The strength of the Satellite armies of Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Albania is estimated to have increased from 271,000 to 363,500 between July 1949 and July 1950. During the same period, the number of T-34 Soviet tanks assigned to these armies is estimated to have increased from 254 to 522. This compares with a Yugoslav army of 250,000, equipped with 300 T-34 tanks.

For many months substantial shipments of Soviet supplies and equipment have been coming into Bulgaria, Albania and, possibly, Rumania. These shipments are continuing.

Bulgarian troops are now concentrated in normal maneuver areas near the frontiers. On the Yugoslav border they are concentrated in the strength required to launch an attack in this area. For the last year, information from normal channels on the key area of Rumania has been so inadequate that undetected activity (including troop movements) on a substantial scale could well be taking place there. Unconfirmed reports from other sources suggest that, in fact, such activity has been underway. Intelligence coverage of Hungary is still adequate. During the past year the two Hungarian divisions have been brought up to strength and there has been evidence that cadres have been training with the Soviet forces in that area.

Including the Soviet divisions in Austria, there are estimated to be six Soviet divisions with 1,000 tanks in the Satellites bordering on Yugoslavia. The equipment and tanks belonging to these divisions could be quickly transferred to the Satellite forces. Soviet military missions could simultaneously provide tactical direction.

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Confirmed evidence at present is insufficient to warrant a conclusion with respect to whether Satellite forces as presently constituted have the capabilities for a successful attack against either Greece or Yugoslavia and to whether such an attack is impending. However, in view of the confirmed increase during the past year in Satellite capabilities and the demonstration in Korea of Soviet capabilities for directing and supporting Satellite forces, it is no longer safe to assume that the Satellites lack the capabilities for military aggression in the Balkans.

If the USSR decides to sponsor further military aggression using the organized military forces of Satellite states, there is a strong possibility that such aggression will occur in the Balkan area. The importance the USSR attaches to the Tito heresy and the strategic factors involved suggest strongly that if such an attack is launched it will be against Yugoslavia.

On the basis of currently accepted information, the Satellites are estimated to have the capability of initially overrunning the northeastern part of Yugoslavia. The ability of the Tito regime, once driven from this area, to control the remainder of the country, and perhaps eventually to counter-attack, is problematical and depends largely on the degree and promptness of Western assistance.

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